



Archae



underground

adventure

artifact

279 22 20

Chapter 1 by Phantim

The humidity stuck to me like a bad smell as I crawl through the dark hall. Only the low orange glow of my torch to guide me through these ancient underground tunnels. Vines and ancient carvings cover the walls... the sweet earthy smells of dirt and dust fill my nostrils. A low rumbling fills the previously silent tunnel. Uh-oh. I feel the ground quickly and violently collapsing below me. I'm sucked down before I can react.

I land with a thud in a pile of dirt and rubble. Looking around in shock and some slight pain, I see it.

Chapter 2 by Phantim



The magic Crystal of Utman Ka. It was hard to even fathom that the Egyptian Pharaohs had built a vast underground kingdom so far from Egypt. But I had. I had staked my entire fortune and career on finding it. I stand up and begin to walk towards the radiant gem on its pedestal. I stop immediately, however, freezing in a panic... the walls are moving.

Chapter 3 by Kendall



Fear overwhelms my every limb. My eyes frantically search the barren walls for anything that could quite possibly save my life. Ancient scriptures, hidden levers, puzzle pieces... anything!

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I begin to count the tiles that stand between me and my ultimate death. Seven, I can feel the sweat roll off of my forehead and into my eyes. Six, the walls seem to be moving faster, as if fuelled by my anxiety. Only five more tiles under my feet and my shaking hand sends sparks flying in all directions from my torch.

The Crystal is daunting, and sits on it's lone pedestal in front of me. Four, I suddenly notice that the walls don't have a contraption to keep the Crystal from being crushed. What if it gets destroyed?

Going against all that I've read and was taught, my body can no longer resist the urge to grab it. I drop my torch and am immediately engulfed in darkness. I lunge forward and the Crystal is cold and solid in my hands. Just as the walls swallow the third tile, I clench my eyes shut and hold the Crystal tight to my chest.

I hear a deep, bellowing click as the walls halt their movement. I am shoulder to shoulder with the ancient stone and I vigorously try to wiggle myself loose. I shuffle my feet forward and stub my toe on the base of the pedestal. A familiar rumble fills my ears and the platform falls through the stone tiles.

It hits something below it with a shattering crash, and the small passageway is noiseless. Deep, harmonious, singing begins to eat away at the silence. I inch my way forward so that I am able to find the source of the voices.

The faint glow of a fire comes into sight, and so does the figure of a large man. And a second one, and a third! Soon begins a conga-line-like formation of bodies circling the fire. Their chants are simultaneously cut off by the first figure. Through the silent anticipation of what they would do next, I can hear and feel my heart ripping through my chest.

The first man raises his large arms, and they are fully extended abover his head, the group shouts, "Utman Ka awakens!"

Chapter 4 by NishthaAurumCakes

1/2

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I looked around in confusion. "But... these people are hundreds of years old! These people should be dead! Utman Ka awakens!"

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I clutch the crystal close. I couldn't lose it, I had risked so much. The first man marches over to me and bellows "To the king's chamber!"

I have no choice but to follow. Just before the other men surround me to escort me to the chamber, I see a tiny glint of an eye peeking out from behind one of the pillars.

Nothing should have followed me here! I had made my journey a secret. No one should have known!

Before I could do anything about it, I was escorted away by the many people surrounding me. But I couldn't help but wonder. Who could have followed me for so long without being noticed? I had been on this quest for weeks now!

They would have many supplies, which I should have noticed by now. How could this be? I obediently followed the men as they led me to the king's chamber. The once bland walls were now decorated with torches and the occasional tapestry. I couldn't believe everything had survived this long.

Finally, we reached the end of the corridor. Two large wooden doors with brass handles loomed in front of us.

The first man knocked on the door 3 times. He looked around just to make sure nothing was following. Then, we walked inside.

The chamber draped in huge silk curtains with a blood red hue. There was a huge master bed with matching silk drapes and a plush comforter.

My eyes roamed the room, taking in the detail and majesty. Finally, my eyes landed on the king. Behind him was the thing or person that followed me.

But this time, it was holding a dagger.

Chapter 5 by zazasoccer05



I am overwhelmed with fear. I need to escape with the crystal, without this thing or person following. I decide to talk- to keep them busy. "Who are you?" I ask. In all my days of learning and studying, never have I ever heard of these people. "We are the guardians of the Crystal of Utman Ka." They reply in song-like voices. "I've never heard of you." I say, confused. "Well, we haven't had visitors in eons!" The first man says. "Finally, a new member!" I glanced around the

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Forever! How could that be!!!!

I whirled towards the door, which was left a crack open.

Suddenly, I heard the king scream.

I turned around again. Blood was seeping out of the king's side. The men that used to be surrounding me quickly rushed to the king's aid. I realized that the thing that was behind the king before had taken action. It had stabbed the king.

I looked at the king's side again, and sure enough, a silver hilted dagger was sticking out of the side.

I shot another glance at the door. This was my chance!

I stealthily raced across the room, making sure the men didn't see me.

I quickly made sure I had the crystal with me before I shot off.

I raced down the dark and musty halls of this underground palace. Torches were becoming more rare the further away I got. Soon, I was running in darkness.

Soon enough, I heard a yell. "THE HUMAN IS GONE!"

My heart beat faster and my pace quickened. I couldn't risk being caught. They probably wouldn't be so friendly this time around.

"HUMAN HAS THE CRYSTAL!" I could hear bellowing from far away.

I had no idea of the powers of this crystal.

My original plan had been to sell it as soon as I emerged from my quest for a heap of money.

But if these guys were so mad about me stealing the crystal, it must have some sort of special qualities.

Suddenly, I heard a noise behind me.

I whirled around, instinctively hiding the crystal behind my back.

A creature unlike any other stood before me. But one thing was familiar.

I recognized those eyes...

Chapter 7 by Kytara Draco



They're...mine. I swear it. The beast has my eyes. Not only that, it almost looks as though it was human once.

But that can't be, can it?

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I start to back away, clinging to the wall as my blood turns cold.

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when the beast talks and

"Son."

Son? What?

"Come close to me, boy. I know you. How could I not? I watched your mother sleep as I held you, newborn, in my arms. I watched her die slowly and painfully, and I cared for you since then. This form..." he gestures to his hideous self... "is a result of what I passed on to you. Lust for adventure. That crystal did this to me. I beg you, son, return it!"

My heart crumbles in my chest. This is my dad? The man I adored who disappeared when I was ten? How could I believe this monster?

But then, can I afford to doubt him?

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